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Oral statement presented by Michel Robert to the 36th session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

Item 6: QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

I would like to thank you very much in the name of the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples for having agreed to listen to us on the question of East Timor. The mass media speak little about this small territory because Timor is far away, and headlines often concentrate elsewhere. Nevertheless, there around the Indian Ocean, human rights are repeatedly violated.

It must be said that the Indonesian government has done everything to keep silent on the situation of the Portuguese colony invaded in 1975 by its army. Indeed Jakarta has had to decide to invite some ambassadors and journalists to visit East Timor, but we must recall that their movements have never been free and that they were always accompanied by Indonesian military staff.

Notwithstanding this blockade, letters from people of Timor addressed to their families, as well as reports, have passed through. Gradually the curtain has been lifted and the horror of a genocide has been discovered. Humanitarian organizations and personalities committed to justice have denounced what the representative of Indonesia, on the occasion of the 4th Commission of the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1982, qualified as "baselesss accusations", "tortuous reasoning", "grotesque affirmations".

Some weeks ago we received 8 documents issued by the Indonesian military authorities. The documents were destined to Indonesian soldiers stationed in East Timor, 84 pages in all. These documents were seized in December 1982. They are signed by a colonel and a commander and are dated July and September 1982. Seven of the documents are "secret", the eighth is for "limited" distribution. These documents allow us to understand more clearly the results of the investigations carried out by the Catholic associations or the desperate letters of inhabitants of Timor. For actually the situation has not changed since last year.

The population is always mostly assembled in strategic villages. This policy has completely destroyed the traditional economy - the inhabitants no longer cultivate - and is at the origin of the starvation the island periodically suffers. Note in this connection that self-sufficient

villages are suspected by the Indonesian army. That is what one document says.

The village population is very severely controlled by the Indonesian army. Michel Honorin, a French TV reporter, accompanied his film on Timor in June 1980 with the following comment: "the army is everywhere, omnipresent. Nothing is done without it, without its agreement. It is there, in every village, in every hamlet... In order to leave the villages, to move, everyone has to get authorization from the army; an authorization which is refused most of the time". In 1983, the situation is the same. In a letter dated 28.12.1982, a missionary in Timor asks himself: "If the people are happy, if they want integration (...) what are all these battalions of élite troops doing here, troops of different kinds of military forces, police, this enormous apparatus of people paid for watching out, spying, day and night, even the most humble people?".

Are these "baseless accusations"? "Grotesque affirmations"? "Tortuous reasoning?" We have the answer in the documents mentioned before. For instance: "the officials expressing negative opinions must be watched", "suspicious elements among the population must be detected", "people having contacts with the GPK (FRETILIN) must be tracked down by daily surveillance", a complete list of the inhabitants of the villages including every task has to be established". Another document says "among the population of each village the inhabitants still staying in the forests have to be checked giving their name, age, educational level, whereabouts of their women, brothers, children". Another document indicates "how to protect the inhabitants from the influence of the GPK". "Every villager must possess a travelling permit for leaving the village", "the villagers must be forbidden to go to work alone in the fields", "inspection rounds must be organized in order to prevent clandestine meetings in the villages". Another distressing document deals with the organizing of daily and nightly round-ups. At night the villagers must remain in their homes. "Those going out are considered members of the GPK trying to flee".

We can understand much better today in light of these documents why the insecurity is permanent and why the arrests are numerous. People hesitate to speak, to confide.

Another point worries us: the displacement of populations. The Indonesian authorities announced last March that the Atauro camp "shall be closed at the end of this year" (Le Monde, 10th March 1983). We recall that about 4000 persons have been deported to this island situated north of Dili, the capital. The International Red Cross spoke of 806 families, i.e. some 3280 persons. The information dates from 1982. These "temporary displacements" are carried out, according

to Jakarta, for security reasons. What is actually happening? We remain very worried because in one of the documents in our possession, instructions are given for separating the families from the GPK combatants still staying in the forest by sending them to the "Atauro island".

According to well-informed Catholic sources numerous inhabitants were beaten, tortured, killed. Amnesty International indicated last year that "missing persons" had been killed. Amnesty even gave the names of those persons. We also recall the very numerous testimonies which have mentioned massacres of women and children, rape, cruelty and torture. We refer to the declarations of Mgr. Martinho Lopes, former Apostolic administrator in Dili and to the report of the very official local Parliament issued to the Indonesian President last year.

We have another letter by a missionary who writes in December 1982: "The nightly arrests and disappearances continue without decreasing in the least. These families are so anguished these days - even in Dili - because of the imprisonment and because theydon't know their families' fate!" In this letter the missionary speaks of persons stabbed, thrown into precipices, of exposed heads... In a recent interview (July 1983), Mgr. Lopes,mentioned above, speaks of "torture", "massacres", "genocide", "violence of all kinds". And all this in complete impunity, because in one of the documents mentioned, the Indonesian military authorities indicate how to proceed with interrogations of prisoners. We have noted some significant sentences: "In case rough methods were used, no witness should be present, in order to avoid the antipathy of the population". Another sentence: "Taking photographs which could reflect torture must be avoided". The word torture is used. Torture is therefore encouraged in East Timor, and the different testimonies we have cited prove that the military staff do not hesitate to resort to it.

Why all these massacres, all this torture, all this cruelty in East Timor? Why these violations of human rights"? Why this repression against this little people because, according to Indonesia, it is "satisfied" with the integration of his country"? In fact the people of East Timor have never accepted the invasion. Mgr. Lopes declared some weeks ago: "the people of Timor like their land. Even though silenced they have shown to the astonished eyes of the world an extraordinary passive resistance". With regard to the Indonesian authorities, they must admit secretly and bitterly that "the population trust the GPK more than the Indonesian army". This sentence is taken from one of the documents.

Before the deadlock of such a repression, Jakarta was obliged to negotiaite. A meeting took place from 21st to 23rd March 1983 between the Indonesian Colonel Purwanto and the Commander-in-Chief of the military liberation forces, Commander Xanana. A ceasefire was called. We can only be satisfied with

the opening of this dialogue. It follows the Portuguese initiatives and is a first step in the long road of the people of Timor towards recovery of its liberty.

But we remain preoccupied and anxious after the recent declaration by General Benny Murdany, Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian armed forces given to the Jakarta daily newspaper "Sinar Harampan" last Wednesday: "No more fun and games. This time we will be ruthless". This time the armed forces are going to use the means available to them in oder to sweep away the remaining members of FRETILIN".

The people of Timor are preparing to live through a new nightmare, unless the international community reacts more forcefully to this new call for murder.